

Please send to: [REDACTED]
 Approved For Release 2001/08/28 : CIA-RDP78-01634R000300030044-8

UNCLASSIFIED

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

No. 148

January 29, 1958

FROM: USIS BONN

TO: USIA WASHINGTON

SUBJECT: German East Zone Telecasts Specially Produced for West
 German Viewers

FEB 4 15 42 '58

REFERENCE: USIS BONN Desp. # 304, May 8, 1957-1BS

USIS BONN Desp. # 333, June 21, 1957-1BS

4 Action Info: 1/5 IAE/X IMS IR1 IPS 10P/LN
2-4 1BS State CIA Army

The following is a translation of an article in "Der Spiegel",
 Vol. 12, No. 5, Jan. 29, 1958, "Politics at Coffee Time".

"Since the beginning of this month, "GDR" television has been taking advantage of a particularly weak spot in the weekly program of West German Television ("Deutsches Fernsehen"). On Saturday afternoons between 1600 and 1700 hours, i.e., at a time which West German TV usually fills with children's features or documentaries on rodents, East Zone TV beams into the Western Sectors of Berlin and the areas of the Federal Republic close to the Zone border a program especially tailored for consumption by adult FedRep citizens.

The East German "State Radio Committee" set up a "Telestudio West" in Berlin-Adlershof for the express purpose of producing TV features designed for telecast to West Germany at "coffee time", a peak viewing hour. Although the TV viewers in the "GDR" (appr. 160,000) can also see these Saturday special programs of "Telestudio West" they are specially designed to intensify the heavy television offensive started by the inauguration of new and powerful transmitters near the zonal border.

Responsible West German radio officials are afraid that the East Berlin functionaries might in due time extend the programs of "Telestudio West" to a regular second program for a West German audience. Already now such a program could be received in West Germany by an estimated 200,000 set-owners.

The kind of fare the East Berlin TV functionaries intend for the West German audience can already be perceived from the (present) Saturday afternoon telecasts of "Telestudio West" whose announcers introduce the program with the standard phrase: "My dear television friends in the Federal Republic..."

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file

USIS:RT/Wengel/ib

25X1A9a

UNCLASSIFIED

Please send recommendations
 [REDACTED] Release 2001/08/28 : CIA-RDP78-01634R000300030044-8

Page 2
Desp.No. 148
Dated: Jan. 29, 1958
From: USIS Bonn

A part of the present one-hour program is always reserved for the usual zonal propaganda show. West German television viewers, for example, will see a film report on the inauguration of the "first German Atom Reactor" at the Institute for Nuclear Science in Dresden, or remotes from the East Berlin Parliament (Volkskammer). The commentaries with which "Telestudio West" accompanies such items give fulsome praise to the progress made in the "Workers' and Farmers' State", e.g., in the report on the atom reactor: "This is another triumph of progressive socialist science and young scientists...", or, in a different context: "This proves the healthy of our economic structure because we know, for instance, that in the US at the present time every 20th citizen is without employment."

However, aside from such slogan-ridden commentaries which would hardly lure West German viewers to their TV sets, "Telestudio West" in the second part of its Saturday afternoon program also telecasts features which can well stand comparison with Western programming. Recently it transmitted a documentary on Red China, entitled "China - a Country Between Yesterday and Tomorrow", photographed by French and Dutch cameramen. Immediately after the movie premiere of this film, English and Swiss critics had attested to the producer its masterly camera technique and objectivity.

"Telestudio West", however, does not stop at just showing films. The studio staff have developed their own style of television propaganda. With a special device they photograph programs of West German TV - particularly of the "Tagesschau" - and transmit excerpts of these programs with their own commentary. What tricks they use for this sort of manipulation came to light recently when "Telestudio West" "re-made" a West German TV report on the visit of Bundespraesident Heuss to Berlin. During his visit, Heuss had been guest at the opening of "World Veterans' Day", visited an exhibit "Disabled War-Veterans at their New Jobs", and later inspected the ruins of the former Reichstag Building. West German TV eagerly covered all these ceremonies. On the following Saturday already, "Telestudio West" offered excerpts from the West German film reports, particularly on the inspection of the "Disabled War-Veterans" exhibit. The East Zone narrator commented this way: "Heuss was in Berlin again, wallowing in front-city politics (Frontstadt-Politik) there, he also inspected the former Reichstag, slated to be rebuilt as a symbol of the partition of Germany, he also opened an exhibit of artificial limbs; but the countless unemployed of West Berlin he did not visit."

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Page 3 Approved For Release 2001/08/28 : CIA-RDP78-01634R000300030044-8
Desp.No. 148
Dated: Jan. 29, 1958
From: USIS Bonn

It seems that the bosses of "Telestudio West" have the intention of giving still more room to this new television propaganda in the future. Anyway, the East Berlin Television Center has - expressly for the purpose - bought an outfit in the Federal Republic, which will make it possible for them to photograph all programs of West German TV off the screen of a TV set. The fact that the East Zone authorities concerned granted the television people the tidy sum of appr. DM (West) 100,000 for the purchase of this outfit clearly demonstrates the value East Zone propagandists ascribe to this television offensive.

Therefore, West German radio and television officials have begun to think about the means to defeat the propagandistic efforts of East Zone TV. The Chairman of the Radio Council (Rundfunkrat) of Radio Free Berlin (SFB), Professor Devifat, recently issued a marching order: "Berlin Television must not fail in its contest with television of the Soviet-occupied Zone. This contest must be sustained technically and organizationally; there is nothing to be afraid of from a public affairs point of view ("Publizistisch ist er nicht zu fuerchten").

This statement was an allusion to the fact that the free Berlin television station mainly does not have sufficient financial means to counter the Eastern television offensive effectively with attractive programs. E.g., SFB still has not been able to buy its own kinescope outfit; if the station wants to kinescope a program, it has to resort to a make-shift outfit which technicians of Bayerischer Rundfunk rigged up years ago and later turned over to SFB.

In spite of all these difficulties, SFB, a few weeks ago, had developed its first plans which, it was hoped, would help to get TV viewers in West Berlin and West Germany away from East Zone channels. At that time "Telestudio West" was telecasting its special programs late Saturday night (2200 hours), and the West Berlin TV people wanted to counter it at the same time with a late evening discussion program similar to Werner Hoefler's famous International Journalists' Roundtable (Internationaler Fruehschoppen), in which personalities of Berlin art, stage and screen would participate. However, the Berlin station's plans for the time being were frustrated by the station's lack of funds. And before West German TV was able to counter the East Zone's evening "Telestudio West" with an attractive program, the East Berlin TV people decided to change the time of their special show for West Germany from the evening to the hour between 1600 and 1700 in the afternoon when the West German program caters mainly to school children."

Hedville E. Nordness
Public Affairs Officer